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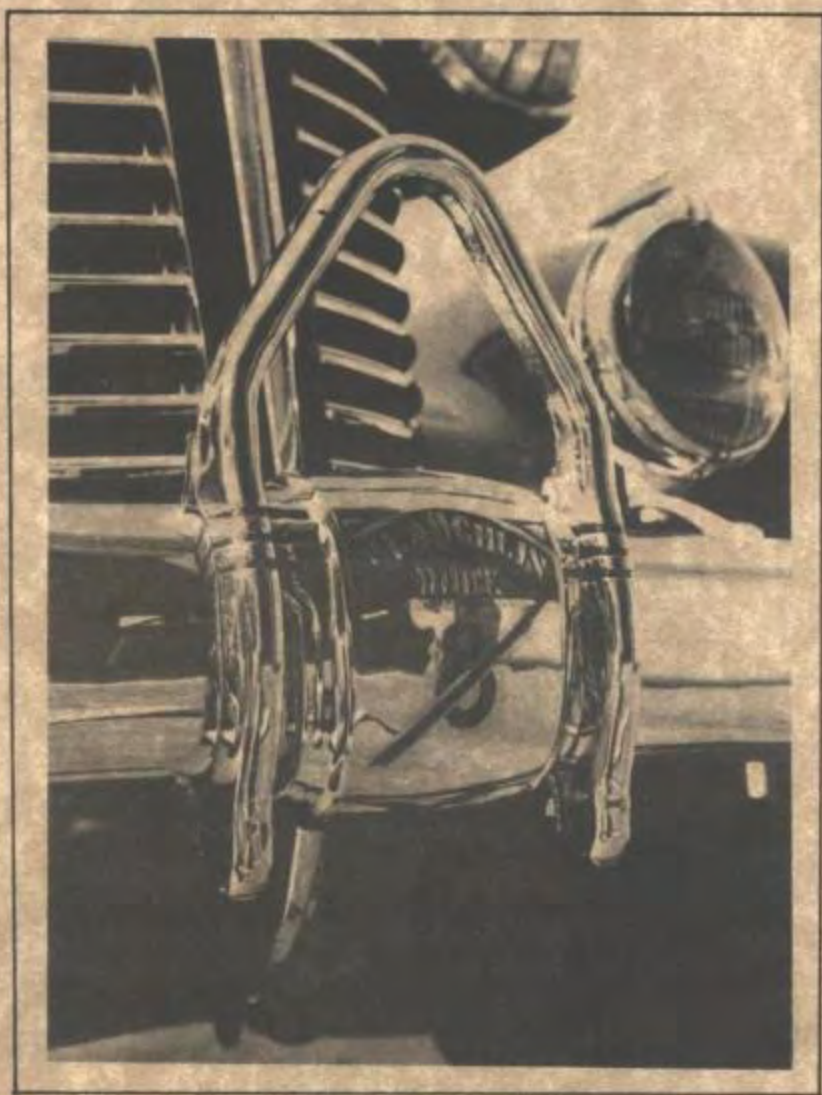
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THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



Volume V • Number 6



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VOL.V • APRIL 1987 • NO. 6

● **William E. Olson, Editor** ●

● **842 Mission Hills Lane, Worthington, Ohio 43085** ●

THE SHOW WILL GO ON

As of the closing days of March, a few less than 30 people had committed to the Club Meet to be held this summer. Although we said in the last issue that a minimum of 35 cars by April 1 was necessary, Marv Rhynard and I decided that we were close enough to that number to go forward. Details appeared on pages 1 and 2 of Issue 5, but just to refresh everyone's memory, the Meet is planned for July 18 at Crossroads Village in Flint, Michigan. In addition to the various things mentioned already, Marv has advised me that the Village officials have agreed to a parade, and that he has made arrangements to have a video tape of the parade done.

To repeat myself, this promises to be a terrific event. I have received favorable comments from many members who say they regret that they live at too great a distance to attend. Those of you who do not suffer this handicap, and have not signed up, please do so right away. Members are coming from as far away as Maryland. When you read my glowing account of the Meet next September, and see all the photos, you'll be sorry -- **VERY SORRY** -- if you were not there.

The last page of this issue is a Registration Form. Please fill this out and send it to Marv Rhynard pronto, along with your check for \$20. Believe me, you won't find a better value. (If you have already signed up, please send in the form anyway, with a note that you have paid, so that Marv will have a uniform record of the attendees.)



FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS



I would like to see 50 cars. There will be no judging, no awards; everyone who gets his car there will be a winner. (Those who do not have cars that can be driven or trailered, you are of course welcome also.) Check the last issue again for details. In addition to all the other great events, I can guarantee that everyone attending will hear the Editor's Favorite Lawyer Joke, The Story of the Two Antique Car Buffs Who Ran Out of Gas and Had to Sleep in the Widow's Barn, and other Entertaining Tales that have never appeared in print. Plus Other Surprises!



DON'T MISS OUT!



PACIFIC NORTHWEST TOUR

Two of our most intrepid trippers, Doug Nelson and Bob Pipkin, have hatched a plan for a '37-'38 tour in the "Great Northwest." This is planned for July 31-August 2. Final destination is historic Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood, opened in 1937, with other stops at Maryhill Museum in the Columbia River Gorge and the equally-historic Columbia Gorge Hotel at Hood River. "Beautiful country and a chance to blow the cobwebs out of those carbs." People interested should contact Doug prior to June 15. "We hope," he says, "people from outside Oregon and Washington will consider visiting our great area, meeting other Buick people, and having a lot of fun." Sounds terrific to me.

Doug's address: 761 Hylo Road, S.
Salem, OR 97306
Call evenings: 503/399-0647.

BUSINESS COUPE CONVERSION

One of our members, who is in process of doing it, has offered to prepare an article on converting a business coupe (46) to a sport coupe (46S). It will take a few months, but we will print this as soon as possible. Many people refer to the model 46S or 66S as an "opera coupe." This is not correct: the fold-down seats are "opera seats," but the car is a "sport coupe." It is assumed that the reference is to fold-down seats in theaters, or "opera houses." When I was a boy, the car was pronounced "coo-pay" but now everybody says "coop." The word is, of course, French, and comes from the verb meaning "cut." Thus a two-passenger, single-seat carriage or railway car compartment was a standard size "cut" in half: a "coupe'." French-language ads for Canadian Buicks called the business coupe "le coupe' d' affaires," a name I commend for its obvious cachet to all model 46 owners, although I suspect more "affaires" were carried out in the back seats of sedans.

c'est encore le Buick ! - Bill

Canadian Buicks



Some time ago, Ross McConnell (#484) of Oakville, Ontario promised to gather material on Canadian Buicks, and to follow up the story on his little adventures that appeared in Issue No. 1 (September 1986).

Those of you who have the book The Buick, a Complete History can read there the story of the founding of the McLaughlin Carriage Company in the 1880's, the move to automobiles in the early Twentieth Century, the meeting of "Sam" McLaughlin and Billy Durant, and the eventual sale of McLaughlin Motor Car Company to General Motors of Canada. Canadian-built Buicks were called McLaughlin-Buicks until World War II.

Unlike the Australian Holden, which had its own body and interior, the McLaughlin cars resembled U. S. Buicks quite closely. There were, however, some differences in the running gear, and the series and models were numbered differently.

Great Britain had a heavy tariff on imported cars, but those made in British Commonwealth nations were exempt; thus most of the Buicks coming to England were McLaughlins, advertised as "Products of the Empire." Without doubt, the most well-known of these were the two custom-bodied 1936 Limiteds made for the Prince of Wales and the 1936 Roadmaster for his "friend," Mrs. Wallis Warfield Simpson. Soon after delivery of these worthy machines, the Prince found himself King -- Edward VIII -- and Daimler, traditional supplier of the royal motor car, found itself in an awkward state. The King's fondness for la Simpson placed him in an awkward state as well: marrying a divorcee, as he wished to do, was, to say the least, outside the conduct expected from English kings. As we all know, the awkwardness was concluded when, in December 1936, Edward laid aside his crown for love, Mrs. Simpson escaped to France in the Roadmaster, and Stanley Baldwin and the rest of England -- including, one assumes, the directors of Daimler -- breathed a sigh of relief. Edward and Wallis were married in 1937 and, as Duke and Duchess of Windsor, lived happily ever after with several more McLaughlin cars.

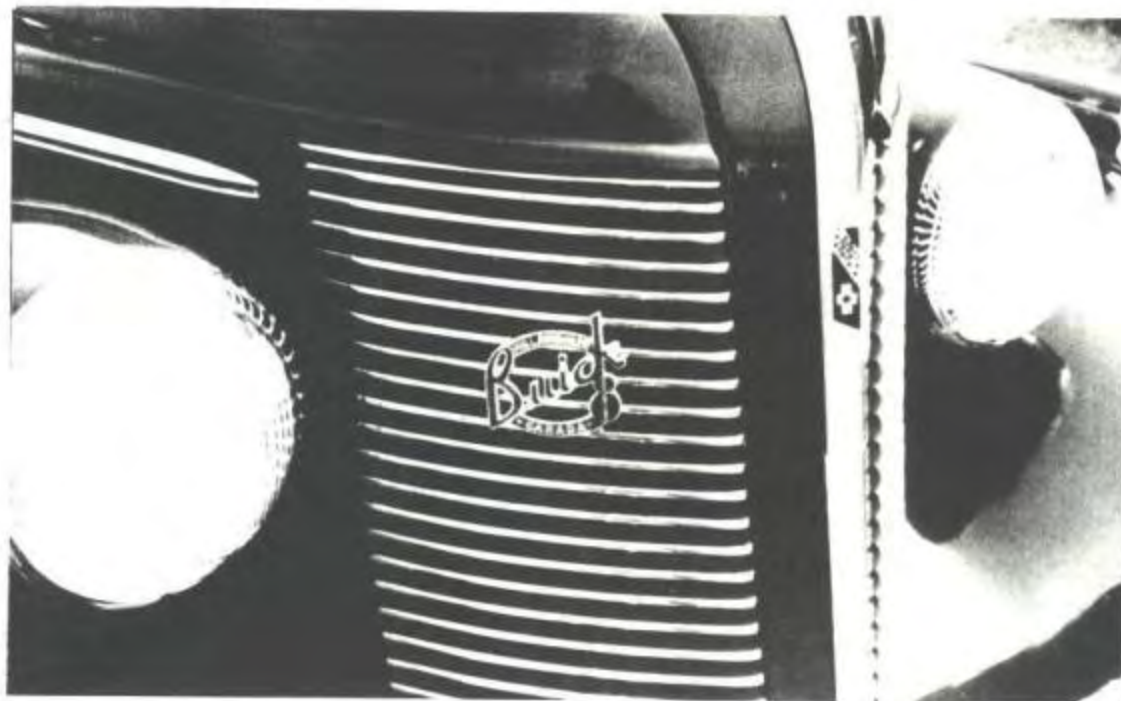
A McLaughlin ~ Buick Primer

ARTICLE BY ROSS MCCONNELL - OAKVILLE, ONTARIO

I promised back in the winter of 85/86 I would try to collect as much information about the Canadian Buick of 1937 and 1938, which we Canadians call McLaughlin-Buicks. After mailing approximately 60 letters across Canada and the U. S. to club members, I received 14 return letters accompanied by some good photos, plus an interesting list of differences between the McLaughlin and Flint Buick.

Today with Canadian and U. S. built cars travelling freely across the Border due to Autopact, it is difficult to understand why these differences existed. The answer of course, was customs duty and the ability of General Motors to use McLaughlin's large auto plant in Oshawa to supply the Canadian market and also the British Empire with General Motors Products of all types except Cadillac.

The major difference between McLaughlin of Canada and G. M. of U. S. was that the former was basically an empire personally owned and controlled by Colonel "Sam" McLaughlin. Quite different from the G. M. of the day and certainly of today. That is why the autos differed in subtle ways from the Flint product. Some wonder whether it was just a desire of Col. Sam's part to be contrary. This situation existed until 1942, when General Motors and McLaughlin entered into an agreement of acquisition with a great deal of money passing hands.



The Buick was Col. Sam's favourite and was the only marque to bear his personal name, being more prominently displayed in 1938 than any other year. A difficult task when you consider the name consisted of ten letters, but had to be incorporated with the five letters of Buick. Most Canadians themselves are always surprised to see the name badges, as they disappeared forty-four years ago.

When you consider the low volume of production (1938 - 5,081 McLaughlins vs 179,000 Flint), plus a climate not very friendly to old metal, the weird accessory differences, paint colours and mechanical parts, the restoration of a Flint Buick is a piece of cake in comparison.

I have tried to list below the differences between the two cars, as they appeared in the two years we are concerned with. Just think while you read this of the difficulty in recreating a true McLaughlin-Buick that is "correct" in every way.

Exterior Trim:

Half moon hubcaps with three rings on outer edges, centre bumper badge medallion and trunk medallion reads, "McLaughlin Buick" in black, not red. Fisher Body plate reads, "Fisher Body of Canada." Trunk hinges on 1938 cars were the same as 1937.

Continued



Hard to find original "half moon" caps. These are not repros.

Paint Colours:

Black, dark blue, dark green, grey and dark maroon with completely different name designations, but same Dupont formulaes.

Interior dash and window garnish mouldings, horizontal wood grain in light walnut on Special only. Other series I believe were similar to U. S.

Engine colour, Buick green, but valve cover and valve guide cover in black.

Interior fabrics seemed to follow U. S. colours and materials and I am sure there are no surprises there.

Accessories:

Electric watch was standard. The radios were the same as U. S., but rarer, with 50% using "rare" U. S. coverplates. Three spoke steering wheels were common. Aftermarket G. M. radio mounted on firewall and connected to dash controls by flexible cables. Heavy duty oil bath air cleaner (all models shipped West of Ontario). Heater was still accessory but standard. Many cars were equipped with block heaters.

Mechanical: (Electrical)

Starting motor and generator manufactured in Canada by McKinnon Industries, St. Catherines and plated as such.

Non-Interchangeable Canadian/U. S. parts, mechanical:

Wheels are Chevrolet truck using 6 studs with left hand threads on the left side, and right hand threads on the right side.

Support steering knuckles, brake drums, wheel hubs all Chevrolet truck.

Differential ring and pinion, axle shafts and gears will not interchange; these parts are probably also Chevrolet truck.

Just a quick glance at these differences can make the average home grown restorer look for a Flint Buick to do his thing; but on the other hand, to have a Canadian-built Buick sitting in my garage makes it all worth it.

Any club members who might wish to join "our club" for an international flavour and receive The Accelerator bi-monthly should contact:

Bob Ward
R.R. #1, Beaverton,
Ontario, Canada L0K 1A0

Membership fee - \$25.00 Canadian.

The McLaughlin Club of course covers all years of Canadian Buicks up to the present, even the original wagons and sleighs built by the McLaughlin family before the automobile became a reality.

As you can see, the differences are far from startling and the observer looking at a row of Buicks would not notice the differences unless he looked closely. Not like the Ausies' Holden with right hand drive, different bumpers, etc.



Series 44 four-door sedan with after-market antenna -- Ross McConnell's "toy".

Now for a few words about my own favorite toy.

The last photo of your article, "Hands (And a Body) Across The Border" was taken in July of 1986. Since then, I have added my side mounts and covers and side cowl covers, complete upholstery trim including door panels, arm-rests, headliner, and sun visors and put on 750 miles of anxious driving. I say anxious driving, because I started to drain and I mean drain 1 qt. of oil to every 2 gallons of gas. Straight in and straight out through the bell housing cover. Every time I shut off the engine, I would have to put a coffee can under the housing, gather a cup full and put it back in through the top. Not very efficient. Either I had to connect a fitting to recover the oil from the drain plug into the oil filter cap or get it fixed. Being a firm believer in giving a mechanic all the printed material including shop manuals and "Technical Tips" from our club that anyone can, I handed the car over to my mechanic. He did everything except read the manual. I find know-it-all mechanics never like to read manuals as we neophytes have to.

A common problem to straight eights, a ball seat arrangement to prevent starving the oil system had become stuck allowing the oil to overflow and run out the housing drain hole. Then a dead generator armature replacement and summer or what was left of it was ahead. The McLaughlin Buick Club meet in Niagara Falls, Ontario in August, brought together 65 Buicks ranging from 1914 to 1970. Five 1938's and one 1937 showed up, a reversal of last year. The photo enclosed, shows our "street show", which resembled an Al Capone funeral parade except for balloons. The picture actually was taken in front of a funeral home. We were the guest of honour of the City of Niagara Falls and the Peach Festival Celebrations.

My wife and I arrived at the motel where all the club members were waiting for all arrivals. We proudly drove in the driveway after a 65 mile trip in 85 degree, humid weather. After shutting her down, she promptly made like a pre-housetrained mutt and left a quart of water on the driveway. Quite an entrance! Never has done it since. This probably was caused by the tight new rebuilt motor on its first highway excursion.

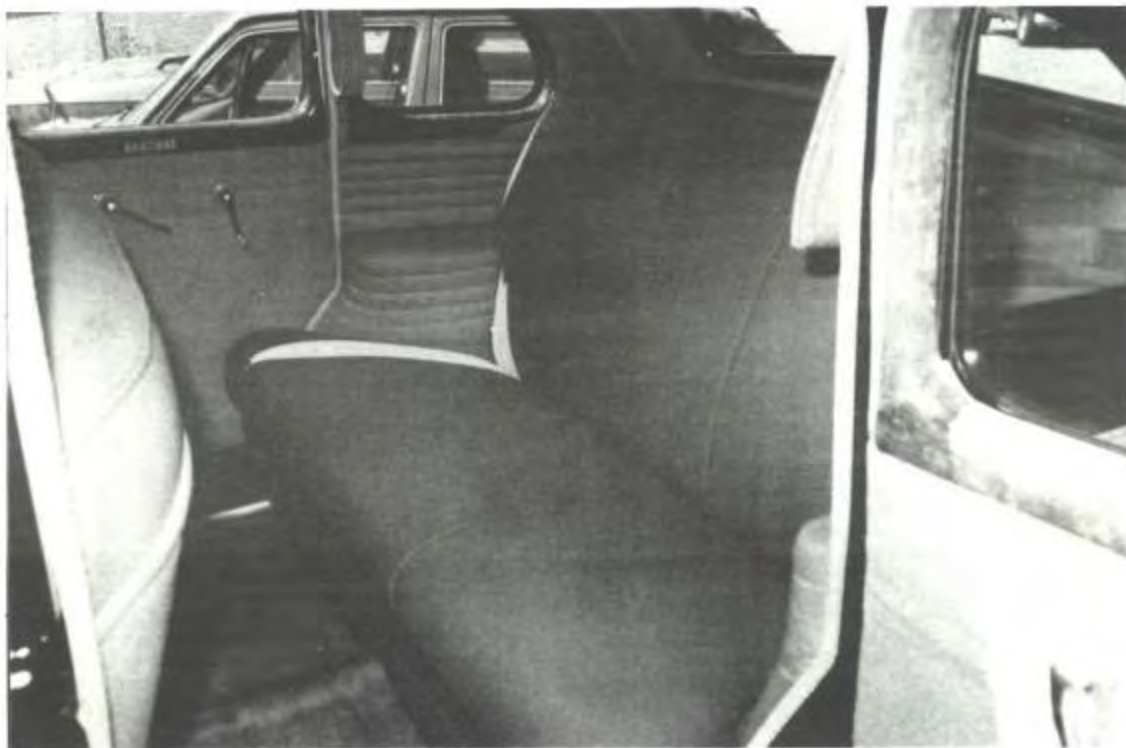
Driving a 48 year old Buick compared to my modern Audi 5000 Turbo is an experience in itself, and certain attributes are especially noticeable. They ride like a cloud compared to the choppy ride of the new suspensions, and the torque in high gear and maneuverability for so large a car surprised me (gas mileage, however, is another matter.) Passengers cannot believe the backseat ambiance. I have done one wedding already, and I am afraid the car started to steal the show from the bride.



Unfortunately, it rained.

She is no show car, as I drive her to work sometimes and take her shopping and on other errands like a regular car. In a metropolitan area of 3 million people, she has to keep up with the best of them, but I find as long as I stay at 50-55 in the inside lane, I am safe and get the usual horns or waves.

People seem to appreciate what you have done, even if they do not understand why. I find in every group that gathers around Old Darlin, you find someone who will tell you an intimate family story of their grandfather or aunt who had a "big Buick just like this one." The most common in Canada are the stories of the Catholic Priest from Quebec. It seems that all priests drove Buicks, mostly black.--you always hear a story with a few reminiscent tears about the Catholic Priest who was the hockey coach and drove the kids to the game in the big Buick in a small town in Quebec. I guess if anything we bring back a lot of fond memories for people.



Professionally redone interior of Ross McConnell's 1938 Special: grey Bedford Cord. Ross did the woodgraining himself.





Ross McConnell's 1938 sedan with fold-down "shark tooth" bumper guard, a rare accessory.



Model 4467 1937 Special convertible coupe owned by Joe Arhini (#359) of Stamford, Connecticut. This one got away. (The car appears to have 1938 U. S. hubcaps.)



1938 Series 44 sedan with many goodies including original radio and running board antenna.



1937 series 46 (Century) coach: a fast runner still clocking well over 70 mph.



1986 McLaughlin meet at Niagara Falls. Looks more like a funeral, except for that one balloon.



McLaughlins had different "series" numbers. This is a 1938 series 44 (Special) "coach" -- fairly rare issue.

CROSSING THE CHANNEL

Another postcard from Derek Brown (#621) of London, England. Although it's a 1936 Buick, I couldn't resist printing this; shows how one could hop the English Channel with one's motor car in the 1950's, for a little holiday in France. Dashed convenient, what?



"They're Still Out There"



STORY BY DOUG NELSON - SALEM, OREGON

I recently returned from an exciting car hunt which proves once again that "they're still out there." A friend mentioned to me that he had run down a lead on a "1939 Buick four-door sedan." It turned out that, indeed, it was a Buick, but not a four-door nor a 1939, but a 1938 Special Business Coupe. (One out of three can't be all bad.) The friend gave me a name and phone number, and suggested I might be able to purchase the car at a reasonable price if I explained that I was a restorer and would not hot rod it or cut it up. After calling the owner and arranging for an appointment the following Saturday, I was surprised to discover the car was located six blocks from my office in downtown Salem, Oregon. The car was in a garage where it had been for 31 years.

On Saturdays I often drive my 1938 Century Coupe to work unless the weather is really miserable. What better way to demonstrate my love of 1938 Buicks than to show up for my appointment driving my restored car. The owner of the Business Coupe greeted me in the alley behind the home of his elderly mother, in whose garage the Buick had been stored in all these years. We hit it off well from the start as I showed him my car and explained how I had restored it from the ground up. We then approached the garage and peered through the broken front window. Under a layer of dust and broken glass sat a "Raphael Green" 1938 Special Business Coupe, model 46.

Yes, Bill, an original Raphael Green car although the fenders, hood and deck lid had been painted Black by the owner prior to 1955, when the coupe had gone into storage. This was one of those cases where it was always going to get "fixed up" soon, but somehow got put off instead. Finally, 31 years and several broken windows later, the owner lost interest and agreed to sell me the car, in part because he believed I would give it a good home.

In the glove compartment in a somewhat tattered envelope was the original owner's manual, jacking instruction tag, Delco battery guarantee and Buick owner service policy. The car is extremely straight and dent-free. Accessories on the car include radio, heater, spotlight, "horseshoe" grille guard and rear gravel shield. A small bench seat had been added by some previous owner who probably had children and needed the passenger seating.

We were able to conclude the transaction and I gave him my check. We arranged to meet the next day, Sunday afternoon, and extricate the car from its tomb of 31 years. It was almost buried by old boxes, lumber, antique sewing machines, and all sorts of miscellaneous junk. My brother Marshall and I borrowed Bob Pipkin's trusty tow bar especially designed for 1937-38 Buicks. When the flat tires were pumped up we removed the front bumper and fixed the tow bar to the frame using the bumper bracket bolts.

Two hours after we arrived to pick the coupe up, we rolled into my home driveway with our prize, proving again they still are out there, sometimes very close to home.

Bob Pipkin, who thought he knew the whereabouts of every old Buick in the area, was totally surprised by this "find" in our own "backyard."

Doug Nelson



Doug Nelson is known to most of us as one-third of the Great Salem Triumvirate: Doug; his brother Nelson; and Bob Pipkin. I dubbed Doug "The Master of Illusion" because of his fondness for arranging period scenes to complement his cars. Some of these scenes have come from his own spacious "backyard," which includes a vintage service station and garage, as well as mini-junkyard. (Remember, one man's -- or woman's -- junk is another's good ol' stuff.) The scene shown here includes Doug's storage building (vintage galvanized corrugated sheet iron), inside which we may glimpse numerous interesting objects.

SIDEMOUNT-ITIS



DE GUSTIBUS NON DISPUTANDUM EST

Here are two letters, from opposite ends of the U.S.A., on "Sidemount Fever." I hope you'll enjoy them. I think Bob Pipkin hits the nail squarely on the head when he says it can't be logically explained or justified. But that's true of nurturing 50-year-old cars in the first place, isn't it? The Editor received several other letters, covering a wide spectrum of opinion -- or prejudice. One member whom I shall not name, ordinarily a rational and intelligent fellow (although at times a bit crotchety), said yes, he would put sidemounts on a Cord 810 or a Lincoln Zephyr or any other car I'd care to name. This extreme view was balanced by a few others who said they never really liked outside spare wheels at all but had been afraid to say so. At least, I got some of you stirred up, which was of course what I had in mind.

Dear Bill,

Congratulations on a job well done on the "spare-tire in-the-fender" article. You did all your homework and supplied good part numbers and pictures. The article should help clear up what will and will not work or interchange.

"Side-mountitis" is probably some sort of mania that can only be cured by driving a Buick with large oblong holes in the top of the front fenders. I've had the mania for several years now and have become dependent on the funny fenders with the large oblong holes.

When I was an early teen I owned a couple of Ford V8's and some Chevrolet sixes. These cars were small and not really of high quality. When I saw the big Buicks and Packards they were usually equipped with dual sidemounts. So, when I decided I wanted a real car, a Buick, it had to have dual sidemounts.

Dual sidemounted cars have several things that are not necessarily a plus: on '37 Buicks, the hood scrapes the tire cover when you open or close it. All the covers rattle and rub paint off the opening of the well and the edges of the covers. And of course you add extra weight up front where

you didn't need it anyway. But, I'd still kick and scream if I had to drive a Buick without sidemounts!!

I'll reluctantly agree that on the certain body styles and series the dual sidemounts seem to distract from the overall body scheme. This is especially true of the 1939 Buick series 40 and 60. It appears as though a garbage can lid was slapped onto the side of the front fenders!.

In conclusion: "dual-side-mountitis" cannot be logically explained or justified. Some of us are just that way and won't listen to reason.

Keep up the good work.

Bob Pipkin (#076)
Salem, Oregon



Dear Bill:

It was a pleasure to read your piece on sidemounts in the January issue.

I especially enjoyed the reference to "Sevenwheel Sam", the fellow who carried an extra spare in the trunk so as not to risk the paint on his sidemount covers and fenders. That must have been a common problem once the public was persuaded that sidemounts should have covers.

But the best, and most needed, part of your article was the discussion of late 1930s styling. You are right, of course: The emphasis on streamlining called for smooth curves and flowing lines. By 1937-38, sidemounts, quite apart from their practical disadvantages (and excepting situations where trunk space was all-important or where vehicles needed two or more spares to accomplish their mission -- as in military command cars), were indeed a throwback to the late 1920s. Yet public preferences led to their incorporation on otherwise sleek cars...at least up to 1941 when they were finally dispensed with. Even some production models of Mitchell's superb Cadillac 60 Special -- for example in 1939 and 1940 -- had sidemounts, though I find it hard to believe he himself preferred them.

I suppose the answer must be that we, like many of the 1937-38 generation, associate sidemounts with the prestige and appearance of big cars of the previous decade....Enough to override pure design criteria. Granting the legitimacy of this "looking backward" preference, I think your comment about the "streamline" Buick sedans not needing (or wanting) sidemounts is right on. Nor is the case for convertibles clear

cut. I think sidemounts do look good on them, but even here I note that one of Buick's few (!) colored ads in 1938 featured an 80C without sidemounts. The Company itself was on the fence, so to speak. The 1937-38 Series 40 and 60 touring sedans look equally good -- to me -- with or without sidemounts. (Maybe this is because the first car I ever owned was a 1938 sidemountless -- but very handsome -- Model 41, which I bought with my mustering-out pay after World War II. That car introduced me to the wiles of the used car dealer; the absence of sidemounts turned out to be the least of its deficiencies....Actually, the additional trunk space would have been just the right size to keep the repair bills.) But sidemounts looked ever so much better on the '37 and '38 Series 40 and 60 than on the '39, which utilized, that year only, an inept overlapping cover design.

The Series 80 and 90 touring sedans and limousines (1936 through 1940), with their longer fenders and deeper wells, probably benefitted most from sidemounts. While they may not have been a great stylistic gain on the Roadmasters (I share the Company's ambivalence), the additional trunk space must have been a great advantage on any car used for long distance family touring....Even if it meant more scrambling to get at the engine and scratches on the wheel covers!

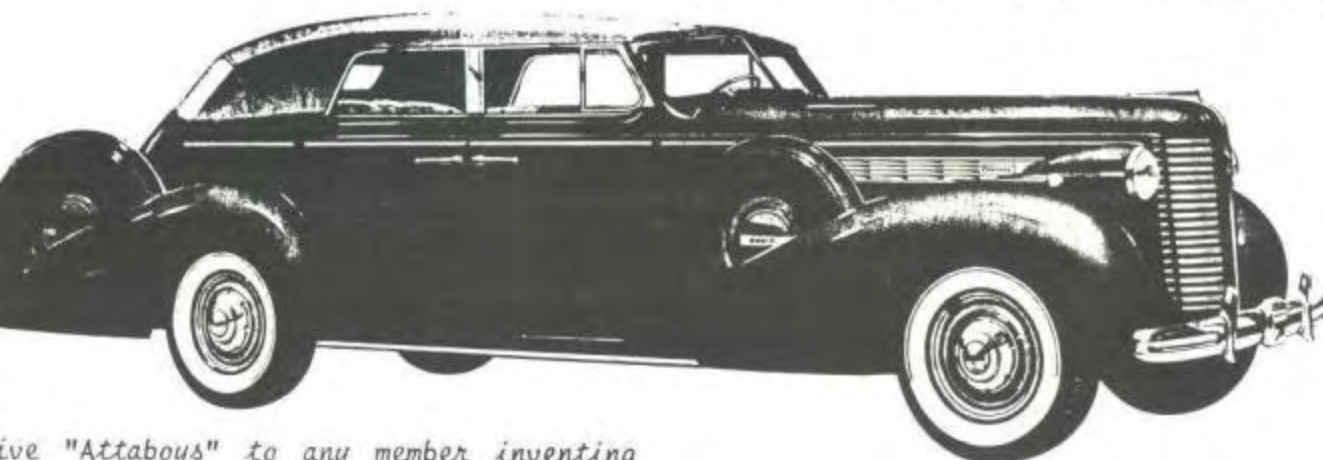
You probably can guess from these remarks that my present Buick -- a 1938 Model 81 -- does not have sidemounts. Indeed, it appears to be a rare specimen, judging from the Complete History ("new" edition, p. 201). But I've been looking for some time now for a good enough set to do justice to the car....just in case.

Thanks again for an interesting and provocative article.

Best regards,

Bill Shipman (#617)
Brunswick, Maine

How about this?



*ive "Attaboys" to any member inventing
semi-plausible story*



NEW MEMBERS



William A. Andrews (#627)
4475 North Road
Canandaigua, NY 14425
716/394-3739
'37 41

Frank Canepa (#628)
185 Sycamore Ave.
Bethpage, NY 11714

John A. Maul (#629)
3301 Garland St.
Midland, MI 48640
517/835-6145
'38 41

John E. Maul (#630)
29230 Joan St.
St. Clair Shores, MI 48081
313/771-6435
*father & son--see above

Tom W. Brown (#631)
43 Argyle Drive
Northport, NY 11768
516/261-2307

Vincent/Charlene Ricotta (#632)
105 Nokomis Parkway
Cheektowaga, NY 14225
716/626-5002
'37 61

Robert L. Green (#633)
906 Somonauk St.
Sycamore, IL 60178
815/895-3546

Chris Campbell (#634)
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517/485-1342
'38 41

Arne Solhaug (#635)
Lyngvn. 5
1825 Tomter
NORWAY
'37 40C

Thomas Dowdney (#636)
87 17th Ave.
Sea Cliff, NY 11579
516/674-4281
'37 41

Cecil R. Don (#637)
251 B Street
Yuba City, CA 95991
916/673-9032
'37 44

George Blake (#638)
1110 Trask Rd.
Aurora, IL 60505
///851-6094
'38 61

Bill Schick (#102)
11 Jackson St.
Norwalk, OH 44857
419/668-1869
'37 41

NEW ADDRESS

Gene Clevinger (#602)
1925 Marrowbone Creek Rd.
Highway 195
Elkhorn City, KY 41522

YET ANOTHER SPECIAL WELCOME. Our overseas membership continues to grow. This month we welcome Arne Solhaug of Tomter, Norway, the first member we have ever had in the Scandinavian countries. Not counting Ed Doucette (#220) -- an American working in The Philippines -- we now have three members outside the USA and other nations where English is an "official" language. And if we do count Ed, we have at least one member in each Continent.

ERRATUM

One member pointed out that the footnote on page 21 of the last issue -- part of the technical material on starters -- is misleading since one can't make a direct comparison of the cold cranking capacity of 6 and 12 volt batteries. I suppose this is true, and I should have known better, but the main points made in the article are I think nevertheless valid. (To find electric power (watts) one multiplies volts times amperes, but the amount or strength of current flowing at, say, 500 amps is the same at any voltage.)



TECHNICAL TIPS



Of Oil Pumps and Rope Seals

ARTICLE BY HUGH PATTERSON - WATERLOO, IOWA

I thought I would write a few lines about my findings when I recently decided to cure low oil pressure problems on my 1938 model 41 with 62,000 miles on the odometer. The gage would register 0 psi on a hot idle.

After reading about fellow members' experiences with this problem, especially Paul Culp's article on oil pump repair, I decided it was time to get greasy and drop the pan. I checked the compression first, just in case it was really time for an overhaul, but the readings were pretty good. Specifications call for 110 - 118 psi. My check from front to rear was 105, 100, 97, 110, 106, 100, 108 and 106 psi. Not bad for 62,000 miles! So, I decided the oil pump repair was all that was necessary.

I removed the stabilizer bar as I wanted it out of the way. I removed the pan next. 49 years of dirt and oil from a leaky front seal took some of the fun out of this, but 32 cap screws later the pan was off.

I found the same thing wrong with my pump as others have: excessive end clearance of the gears with the cover. A local machine shop removed .006 from the body to give .001 clearance, for a \$25 charge. The cover is aluminum and there was no way they could surface it. So, with sandpaper and the table of a drill press, I took an .020 concave dish out of the cover.

Speaking of the cover, I believe this is where most of the trouble with the oil pumps comes from. It is, in my opinion, poorly designed for too reasons: first, it's made of aluminum, which is too ductile for the thin section of the cover; it was also designed too thin, no matter what material is used. The cover is only about 3/16" thick. I believe, especially under cold heavy oil conditions, the higher pressure at the gears forces the cover out near the center and eventually the cover takes a permanent set in that configuration. I think for a better fix, a 3/16" or 1/4" thick plate should be made to fit between housing and cover. Of course, the passage in the cover should be duplicated on the plate. I didn't do this, but time will tell whether I should have.*



This is Hugh Patterson's 1938 Special, with 62,000 miles and its original Whistler Grey paint. Pretty nice for an old lady.

Since I've had low oil pressure for a long time, I thought I would pull the rod caps and Plastigage the clearance. I noticed the main caps have arrows pointing to the front and the rod caps have an indicator bump on the rib towards the rear. Real conformity here. The crank "miked" out great and all the clearances came out around .001. (A little hint here: to avoid the shims falling off when you're not looking, push small rubber hoses on the screws -- clothes pins would work, too).

I pulled a main cap and it looked good also. I didn't Plastigage it as you can't get the oil off the upper side with the crank installed. I checked the crankshaft end clearance and that was .005.

One important item on installing the pump (this was mentioned in a '51 Buick shop manual): the pump should be installed so that with every 90 degree rotation of the engine, you can rotate the drive gear shaft through the backlash. If you can't, then tap the pump in different directions until you get free movement in all 90 degree rotations. If you don't, the shaft is binding in the pump. Don't forget to tighten the two cap screws.

I forgot to mention that my oil pump pick-up float was full of oil just like Paul Culp's, and the screen was clogged. I removed the sheet metal piece that fits over the screen. Then, with a small chisel and screwdriver I pried enough of the retaining lip up to remove the screen and clean it and the metal underneath it.

Continued

Concerning the oil in the float, I pressurized the float under water and found the leak at the joint of the tube to the float. I then unsoldered the small hole in the float and drilled it larger so I could shake the oil out. Re-soldering the joint and hole was not easy due to the heat and resultant oil vapors but I finally sealed it up.

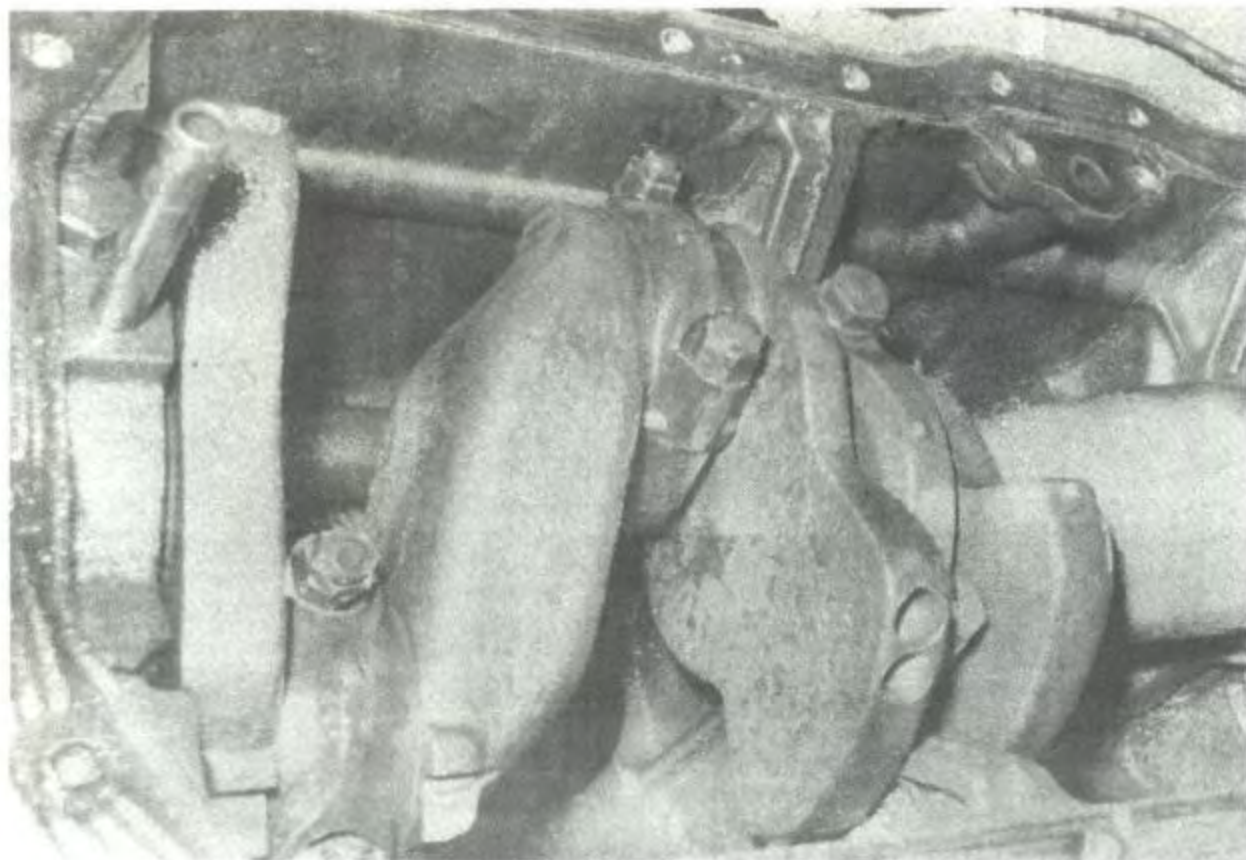
I decided to replace the front rope seal. I removed the fan and pulley. The '38 shop manual says you also must remove the water pump to remove the radiator, but you don't have to. I put a piece of cardboard in front of the water pump hub to protect the radiator in case the radiator touched the hub. I removed the hoses and radiator screws and then with the help of a friend, tilted the top of the radiator to the rear to miss the cross-piece and lifted it out. When you lift it out, you must keep the lower part of the radiator against the radiator brackets to avoid touching the water pump.

I removed the harmonic balancer-pulley screw and with a brass drift drove it off from the rear. I still had the oil pan off to give me access to the rear of the pulley. I found a .020 groove in the pulley so it was back to the machine shop. They spray-welded it and machined the OD and ID (due to weld distortion). I installed the seal in the cover using a large wrist pin to work it into the groove. I made sure, when trimming the ends, that the ends merged together. Then I pushed the pulley into the seal area with a twisting motion for the final sizing of the seal. I used chassis grease on the seal and pulley.

I installed the pulley, radiator, fan and oil pan and other miscellaneous things (such as oil). Then it was time for the "moment of truth" when it's time to start the engine. With crossed fingers, I started the engine and the oil pressure came right up. Pressure is now 25 psi at idle, even after running some distance: a big improvement.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Those who have it might wish to look at Vol. IV, Issue 6, page 22. Early 1937 40 series cars had a problem with leakage around the harmonic balancer. A different timing chain cover, seal, and oil slinger were substituted during the model year. Even at that, the rope seal referred to was not terribly satisfactory. A good fix is to use a 1942 - 52 cover and balancer; this has a neoprene seal. Hugh says he purchased a Fel-Pro overhaul gasket set several years ago from J. C. Whitney, and a rope seal was in this set.

Main & Rod Bearing Inspection



ARTICLE and PHOTOS
By Paul B. Culp, Jr.

Inspecting the crankshaft and rod bearings is a worthwhile procedure for anyone who has an old car and doesn't know its history, or if the oil pressure is low.

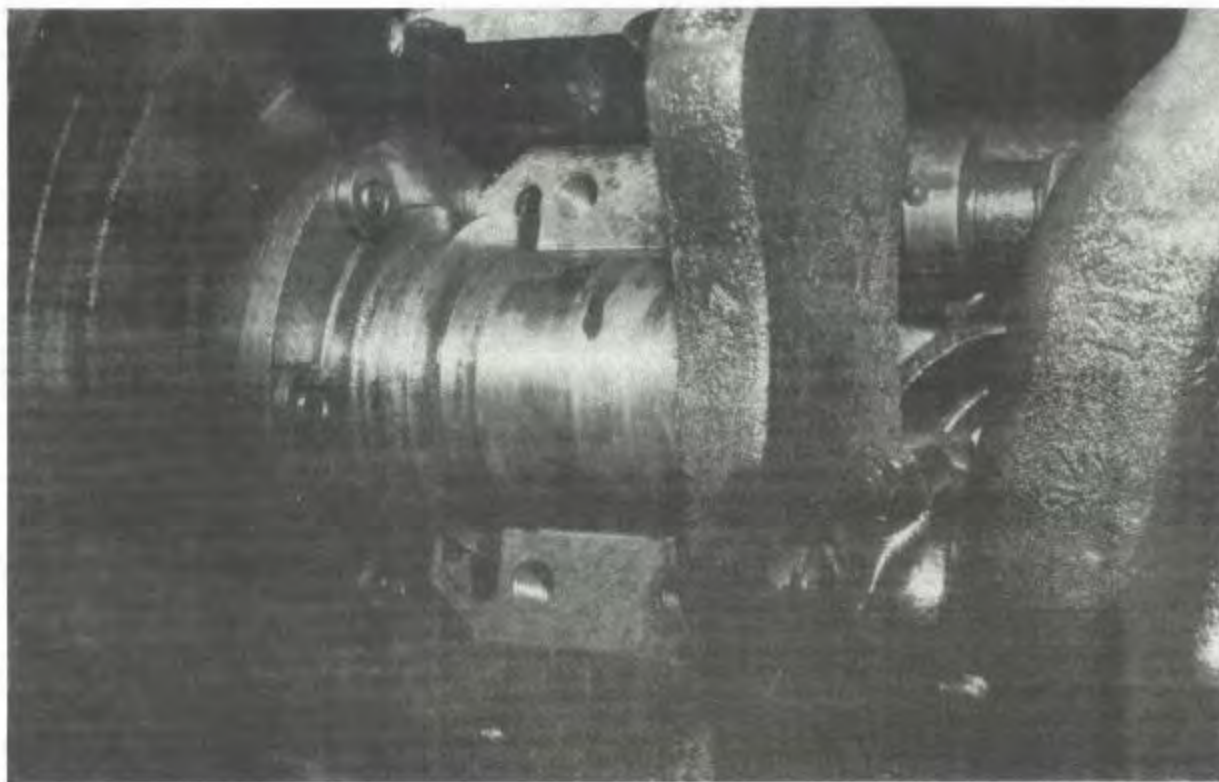
Checking bearing clearance with the engine in the car requires pan and oil pump removal, a torque wrench and "Plastigage" PG-1 (.001 to .003) and PR-1 (.002 to .006).

(Note: "Plastigage" is a registered trademark of Perfect Circle Corporation)

The crankshaft main bearings are shell-type inserts that utilize brass shims that can be adjusted. Generally the lower half of the bearing shell shows greater wear and fatigue. If the lower half shows the effects of normal wear (no heaving, displacing metal, scoring, or discoloration), it can be assumed that the upper half is also in good shape.

Continued

Start by removing the center main bearing cap with the bearing shell. Completely clean the bearing shell and crank journal. (The journal is the part of the crankshaft that turns within the bearings.) You probably won't get all traces of oil off, but that does not matter. Place a piece of "Plastigage" lengthwise along the bottom center of the lower bearing shell. Then install the cap with shell and evenly (alternating from side to side) torque the bolts to 120 to 130 foot-pounds. Remember to keep the crankshaft from turning whenever you are gauging your clearance with "Plastigage".

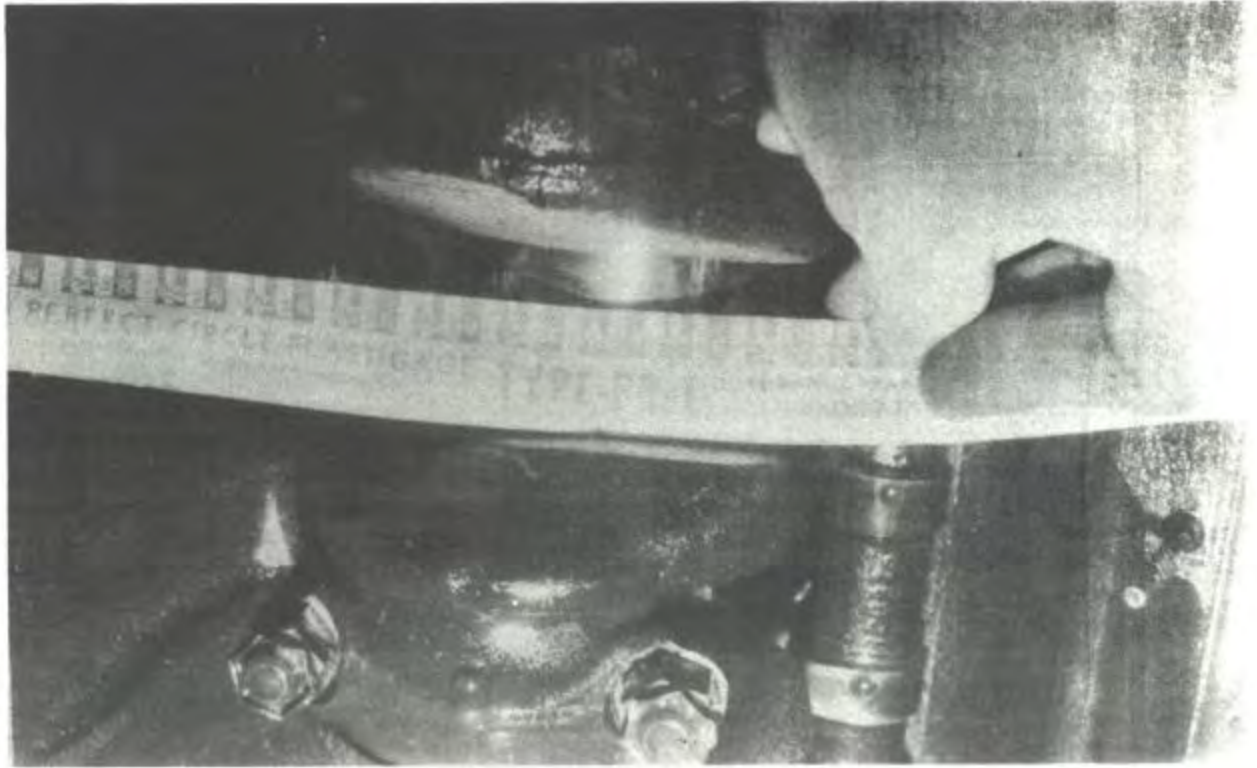


Rear main bearing cap removed from crank.

Remove the bearing cap with the shell. The flattened "Plastigage" will be found sticking to either the bearing shell or the crankshaft. Do not remove until you have used the graduated scale on the "Plastigage" envelope to measure the material at its widest point.

If bearing clearance is within specifications, the bearing insert is in good condition. If not, remove one shim at a time alternating across the bearing. Repeat the installation and torque procedure until specifications are achieved as indicated in your shop manuals (shims measure .0025). Remember also to inspect the center main bearing end play. This has no adjustment. Bearing replacement and/or crankshaft grinding will remedy this problem.

The connecting rod bearing clearance inspection is similar to the main bearing technique. Adjustment is made by removing brass shims. (Under no conditions should the rod or cap be filed.) However, crankshaft dynamics (forces of engine turning) will require "Plastigage" inspections in more than one location of the 360° circumference of the connecting rod crank bearing. With rod pushed up and out of the way, use a micrometer to establish if the bearing is out of round (eggshape). Measure and record crankshaft at 0°, 45° and 90° sectors in relationship to its centerline.



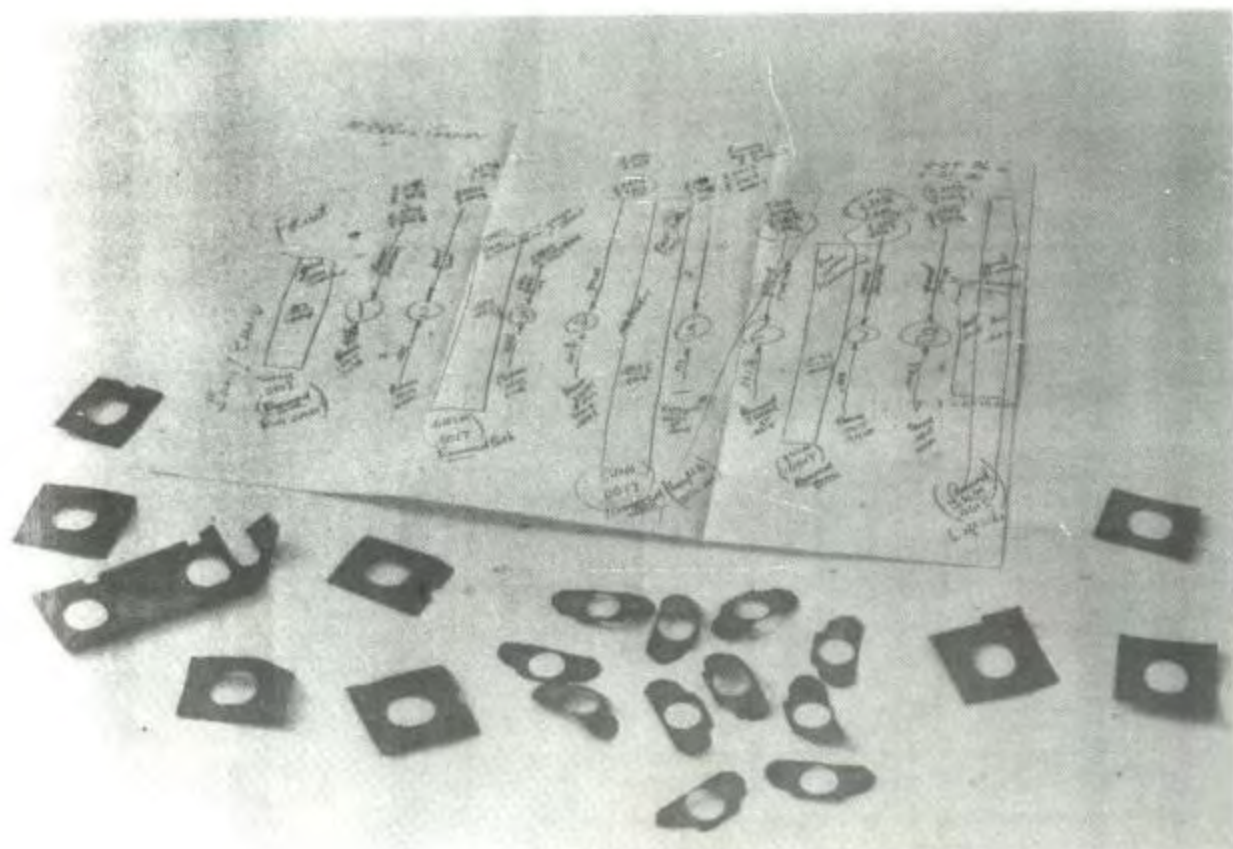
Plastigage and crank journal. Obviously, one does not need this long a strip, but the photo shows what the stuff looks like. When the cap is torqued down over the strip, it will spread; the extent of the spreading will tell you the clearance.

Place a piece of "Plastigage" lengthwise along the bottom center of the lower bearing. Then install the rod and cap and evenly torque the bolts. (Small series - 45 to 50 foot-pounds and large series - 60 to 65 foot-pounds.) Follow the shop manual specifications when doing your shim adjustment. A worn crankshaft will be elliptical in shape causing the bearing to bind during rotation. Remember not to turn the crankshaft while checking clearance. Alternatively remove shims until tolerance is achieved.

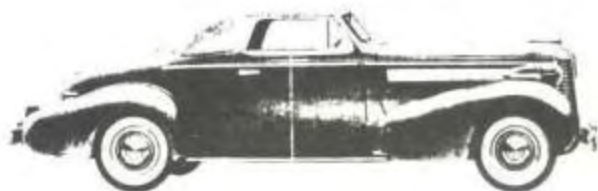
Continued

Replace the connecting rods if they cannot be brought to specifications. Use rebabbitted rods or later year connecting rods or rework the existing rods to accept insert shells (more on this in future article). This is a good time to check your oil pump. If it's ok, assemble bottom end in reverse order.

The above procedure will probably require several hours. Be patient and thorough as you inspect and/or adjust each bearing. This assurance will add peace of mind even if it reveals the need for more series repairs. Anyway, that old crank had to come out sometime. An early warning of possible major engine block damage should be considered a good omen.



Brass shims removed from main and rod bearings, plus Paul's record of what he found and what he did -- helpful for the future.



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